

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Hercules Manufacturing Company

Kentucky Manufacturing Assistance Center

Hercules Gains Strength from Lean Manufacturing

Client Profile:

Hercules Manufacturing Company, established in 1902, manufactures refrigerated transport and truck bodies. The company employs 98 people at its plant in Henderson, Kentucky.

Situation:

Unlike mass-produced assembly-line passenger vehicles, Hercules' truck and van bodies are primarily custom built. The vehicles are used in such diverse applications with limitless combinations of body and equipment variations that Hercules' management knew that it would be critical for the company to maximize its production flexibility while controlling its costs. Hercules' management contacted the Kentucky Manufacturing Assistance Center (KMAC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance with achieving its production goals.

Solution:

KMAC utilized Lean Manufacturing methodology to help Hercules personnel identify and then eliminate non value-added activities from their processes. KMAC Lean experts trained Hercules operators, supervisors and managers in tools such as Value Stream Mapping and 5S. Then they helped Hercules personnel apply these Lean methods to their own production processes and eliminate wasted effort, movement and downtime. Finally, KMAC experts worked with Hercules management to establish programs to help the company sustain the gains they had achieved and adopt a continuous improvement approach for the future.

Results:

- * Increased sales by \$2 million.
- * Retained sales of \$2 million.
- * Realized \$50,000 in cost savings.
- * Invested \$25,000 in plant and equipment.
- * Increased customer satisfaction.

Testimonial:

"With our long history as a manufacturer, we know how important it is to continue advancing our technologies and products as well as our manufacturing practices. With KMAC's help, we are embracing Lean Manufacturing practices to help us become more responsive to our customers' needs and schedules while also better managing our costs. We believe that Lean Manufacturing methods will be a cornerstone of our success for the next 100 years."

Jeffrey A. Caddick, Owner/CEO

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